

IN GUATEMALAN WILDS.

BOUGH TRAVELLING AMONG VOLCANIC MOUNTAINS.

Coban, Guatemala, Oct. 30.—The first day's journey from Sonson brought us to Arenal, the second to Chirato and the third to Coban, the capital of the Department of Alta Verapaz. The way was the same narrow trail up and down the sides of precipitous volcanic cones in many places almost too steep for even a mule to ascend, the trail was always rough, and in some places where the water had washed the earth from the angular volcanic rock which filled the way the difficulty of travel increased to the point of danger. Our mules were surefooted, as well as sharp-backed, and carried us safely up and down the most abrupt places and over the roughest.

The general climate of this part of Guatemala is well

illustrated by the singular facility with which crops are here produced. Each day we saw the entire agricultural process, from the commencement of the preparation of the ground to the gathering of the ripened crop.

To earn a steep mountain side well covered with a growth of tropical vegetation is selected. These peaks or cones seem too steep to permit of cultivation; they are as steep as soil will bear and not slide by its own weight, and yet they are cultivated to the very apex of the cone and produce immense crops.

In preparing the soil a score of laborers (trabajadores) commence at the very bottom of the mountain to cut down the growth of young trees, shrubs, vines and plants, each trabajador clearing a space equal to the stretch of his arms—say six feet. Twenty would thus form a line 120 feet long. As the base of the young saplings and undergrowth is severed near the ground, they fall with the bushy top down hill. Gradually the trabajadores climb the peak until they reach the summit, with the slope behind them covered with the foliage, branches and bodies of the mass of vegetation which has been felled. This mass splits and dries in the sun, and as soon as dry it is set on fire at the bottom and the flames sweep over and up the hill in a terrific whirl of flame and smoke. As soon as the fire is out and the ground cooled it is ready for planting without further preparation, and the trabajadores range themselves in line again at the foot of the mountain prepared for plowing. Each is provided with a long pole sharpened at one end like an ordinary hand-axe, and with a basket or sack of corn supported by a cord around the neck. The line is somewhat longer than at first because now each man covers twelve feet of ground instead of six. With the sharpened pole a hole is made in the ground, just four feet to his right, then four feet to his left, and four feet in front, making, as he proceeds, three rows, four feet apart. Into these holes he places four kernels of corn. The two outside rows are covered by pushing the dirt over the seed with the point of the stick, while the centre row is covered by pressing the earth over the kernels with the foot in stepping. And so the work goes on until the entire side of the mountain is planted, and then the seed is left to the sun and rain and the care of kindly Nature to germinate and face into growth and maturity. There is no plowing, no hoeing, no care of any kind given to the growing plant, neither is there any fear of failure. Ploughing or hoeing would loosen the soil, and the first rain would wash it into the valley. The worms and insects and weed seeds have been destroyed in the avalanche of fire which embraced the hill in the first preparation, and the seed in the ground, labor is at an end until harvest. The rain sends the kernel of corn and causes it to sprout; the sun forces it into rapid growth; the winds at the top while the roots resist and send their fibrous threads further into the ground and cling tenaciously around the broken bits of volcanic rock. When the crop is measured the trabajadores again commence at the bottom, plowing the ripened ears from the drooping stalks and carrying the loads away upon their backs to be stored in some cabana or rancheria until wanted. In a single day's ride we saw ground in all stages of preparation, the trabajadores planting the corn, the young plants just above ground, the stalks half grown, the corn in all stages of development and fully matured.

Surely Nature is kind to her undeveloped children in these mountain wilds and generously provides against their improvidence and slothfulness, and yet we find all through our journey a scarcity of corn. The common yellow is selling in this city for 15 cents a pound, and the price will not materially change until a large amount matures. The reason for this scarcity is that corn planting has been neglected for coffee raising.

If we examine the map of Guatemala in the Department of Alta Verapaz we note the names of many places which appear to be the names of towns or villages. Some of them are clusters of Indian houses (rancherias), but many are only the names of isolated farms. The dots on the map with the poetic names attached give the department an appearance of population it does not deserve.

Arenal consists of one house, used as a dwelling, a barn, a building for drying and separating coffee, coffee floors and a storeroom. It is located in a pocket in the mountains, 3,000 feet above sea level, and the 15,000 coffee shrubs fill a narrow valley, surround the buildings and extend up the side of the mountain a short distance. Some very good machinery was seen at this time, brought over the ocean from Germany and taken into the mountains upon the backs of Indians. At one point a new trail had to be made, the old one being too narrow to allow the passage of boiler to pass.

Senor E. Osage and his two sons are the owners of the place, but all three are at the capital, and the place is in charge of a German, Charles Dressler, and a young man, Eugene Moller, who claimed to be an American, and from New-York. White men visit these mountain farms but rarely and our coming was hailed by these young men as a blessing, a harbinger of good. Our micos and mules were given the best of care at the farm, while we enjoyed the best in the various churches in the neighborhood.

JAMES B. GUEST.

John Minturn, sixty years old, died at his home, No. 333 East Fifty-first-st., on Saturday, from pneumonia, after an illness of ten days. He leaves wife and mother. The funeral will be held at his home tomorrow morning. The place of burial will be determined.

Mr. Minturn was the son of John C. Minturn, a wealthy citizen of this city, who during his life was an intimate friend of Peter Cooper and other well-known men of his time. John Minturn was born here and received his early education in the city schools. When twenty-three years old he went to California, where he married Miss Elizabeth Solly, of San Francisco. He remained in that city for thirty years, during which time he made a comfortable fortune in the brokerage business. He then came to this city to live.

Mr. Minturn was interested in benevolent work, and had given a good deal of money in aid of the various churches in the neighborhood.

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There is a movement to reorganize the Guard Bill further by making it less oppressive. There are now two hundred of the soldiers here, but the number of the guards is still increasing, and is estimated at a quarter-million men, an inspector general and several others. And on top of these is a major-general, with a staff. The governor is the commander-in-chief, and the adjutant-general is the chief of staff. The bill will be a week after the adjutant-general of the Legislature, and in the midst of the senatorial struggle, so that all the time and trouble may be expected here.

The Christian Endeavor has been excellent throughout New-Jersey. The manufacturers and their families better than most, and the workingmen and the working-class, though the holiday demand has exceeded previous records. The steady rate of the new Jersey cities has given great satisfaction in the last ten years. The confectionery of New-York and Philadelphia is the best in the world, and the introduction of the local specialties developed, and now manufacture large and attractive stores, but also became shopkeepers in New York and Philadelphia stores are crowded, and that sentiment will not receive the consideration which they get at home.

The bill of the number of soldiers put an end to the fortification attempts to gain military by denouncing the execution of the law. In this case, as in several others, the act of the United States Court has been upheld, and there is no question of the constitutionality of the same, with the exception of the bill of rights, which has been abandoned.

The United States Supreme Court a few days ago held to be unconstitutional that the attorney for Hurlin, who came before the court, said he would be a bore, which would carry more weight with him if he had been attending to the United States courts for the defense of Justice.

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It was late when we blew out the candle and prepared ourselves for sleep. Visitors were too rare to admit of short evenings, and before we separated my new friend, Mallard, had told me all he knew of the country and its interesting features, and I had told him a great deal more than I actually knew of New-York, and the changes in its street population since he left it three years ago.

We bade goodby to the friends of Arenal and to our German host just as the sun was passing its first Bell-Hartaya rays into the gray sky back of the mountain, but Mr. Mallard insisted upon showing us the way for a league or two.

The trail was the roughest we had yet seen; sometimes we were climbing mountain spurs desperately afoot, and again descending into a deep ravine at the bottom of which was a rushing muddy river which must be forded. Here the Indians cross these swift streams in a bag of cloth, with which they always go, and the Indians are impudent to learn the names of any of these rivers from our micos, and impossible in fact to learn anything from them.

We reached Chirato in the afternoon and found that the Indians had come in and were occupying a square and including a path 50 or 100 feet.

H. STANLEY GOODWIN.

Bethelhem, Penn., Dec. 25 (special)—H. Stanley Goodwin died suddenly here this morning, aged 60. Mr. Goodwin was a guest at the dinner of the New-England Society in Philadelphia on Friday, and greatly enjoyed his host. He worked in his railroad office until 9 o'clock last night and went home and retired in good health. His death occurred at about 3:30 o'clock and was due to heart disease.

He was a popular man in town, was a Republican in politics, but was elected by 500 majority, for eighteen consecutive terms. He was a railroad engineer before attaining his majority. He entered the service in 1852 as a telegraph on the Erie and Lake Huron line, soon becoming a member of the Cotton Exchange. He was conservative in business, but was extremely popular on the Exchange. He was always first in any bit of fun, and when a charitable appeal was made to the members he was always its chief advocate. In his old home, Baltimore, he was well-known and had a host of friends. He was a tough southerner, but made many friends north of the Dixie line, and was south of it. He was a member of the Anti-Slavery and Temperance societies. The body will be at his brother's yesterday to Baltimore, where the funeral will take place to-day in Grace Church. The burial will be in the old family plot in that city.

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JAMES B. GUEST.

James B. Guest, one of the best known men on

the Cotton Exchange, died at his home, No. 32 East Twentieth-st., on Saturday afternoon from heart failure.

He was born in Baltimore on June 24, 1833, and was the son of George Guest, a well-known merchant of that city. He was educated at the Military School in Frederickburg, and started in business when seventeen years old as a clerk with Johnson Brothers, bankers, of Baltimore, soon becoming a member of the firm. After five years, when he had made a good name for himself and became a member of the firm, he left to go into business for himself, and became a member of the firm of Johnson & Guest, which he headed for a number of years.

He was a member of the board of directors of the Bank of America, and a director of the Bank of Maryland.

He was a member of the Anti-Slavery Society, and a member of the Anti-Saloon League.

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